

though it has a Kurdish *ketch*^*da*. It is a rich village, or was, being both pastoral and agricultural. The slopes are cultivated up to a great height, and ox sleds bring the sheaves to the threshing-floor. The grain is kept in great clay-lined holes under ground, covered with straw and earth. I write that the village *was* rich. Lately a cloud of Kurds armed with rifles swooped down upon it towards evening, drove off 900 sheep, and killed a man and woman. The villagers appealed to Govern-ment, after which Hesso, a redoubtable Kurdish chief in its pay, went up with a band of men to Marbishu, a Christian village in Turkey, drove off 1460 sheep, and offered to repay Merwana with the stolen property. As matters now stand 700 of the poorest of the sheep have been restored to Marbishu, Merwana loses all, and Hesso and his six robber brothers have gained 760. The sole hope of the plundered people of both villages is in the intercession of Dr. Cochrane with the Governor of Azerbaijan.<sup>1</sup>

As I reached Merwana at 10 A.M., and the "*katirgis*," after raging for an hour, refused to proceed, I took Mirza and *QasJia* Bardah, the priest under whose hospitable roof I lodged, with me, and went up the valley to Ombar, the abode of Hesso, with the vague hope of "doing something" for the poor people. The path lay among bright streams and flowery pastures, the sun was warm, the air sharp, the mountains uplifted their sunlit snows into a heaven of delicious blue, the ride was

charming. Hesso's  
village, consisting of a few very low rough  
stone houses,  
overshadowed by great cones of *kiziks*, is  
well situated on  
a slope above a torrent issuing from a  
magnificent cleft  
in the mountain wall, at the mouth of which  
is a square  
keep-on a rock.

<sup>1</sup> I give the story as it was repeatedly told to me. It -was  
a very slxady  
and complicated transaction throughout.